



Bringing Resources to Nevada's Adult Education Community

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CMC receives commendation from Senator Reid

On April 7, Churchwright Multicultural Center, Nevada's newest federally funded ABE program, celebrated its one-year anniversary. At an Open House for about 50 people, Ruben Kihuen, representing Senator Harry Reid's office, presented two Certificates of Commendation. They were awarded to Chief Operating Officer Linda Faulk (left) and to Executive Director Lyn Pizor (right).

Churchwright offers classes and tutoring services to ABE, ESL, GED, and learning disabled students. Contact 702/434-6858; lynpizor@yahoo.com.

Educators from four programs prove performance

Seventeen instructors and tutors from four Nevada programs submitted evidence of student outcomes and were awarded their initial ABE Certificates of Performance since January. These educators met the student retention and performance criteria outlined in Nevada's unique outcome-based recognition program.

- ★ Maria Cecilia P. Ordinario, Laronda Poydras (C.A.L.L.)
- ★ Angelique Conger, Kathleen H. Miller, John C. Ohrenschall, Jose J. Perez, Blair Westmoreland (Community College of Southern Nevada)
- ★ Maureen Godard, Joan E. Howard, Joan F. Hulbert (Northern Nevada Literacy Council)
- ★ Donna M. Burgener, Aida Hashemi, Carmen M. Hirsch, Trudy Miller, Ginger H. Ortiz, Lydia P. Riccardi, Silvia Rodriguez (Truckee Meadows Community College)

*** Special congratulations to CCSN's Maxine Engel-Muccigrosso, who provided evidence showing continued exemplary student retention and educational gain during the past three years. Maxine is the first Nevada instructor to renew her Certificate of Performance. ***

For more information, contact Sharyn Yanoshak, 702/253-6280, saylv@cox.net or visit <http://www.literacynet.org/nvabecp/>.



Nevada's educational programs to receive incentive money

The Carl D. Perkins Act supports programs that provide career and technical education to secondary and postsecondary students.

WIA Title 1 creates the overall structure of the workforce development system including state and local workforce boards, one-stop career centers, and Youth Councils.

Through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Adult Basic Education programs provide adult education and literacy services to adults 17 years of age or over who have less than a high school diploma.

According to federal guidelines, when Perkins, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I, and Adult Education programs all meet or exceed established performance measures, they are rewarded with additional funds. For successfully meeting their performance goals for 2003-2004, Nevada's programs will share in approximately \$800,000.

State personnel are currently developing an equitable plan for distributing the monies.

How do Americans view immigrants?

Angela Orlando, editor of *The Change Agent*, March 2005, page 37

What most concerns Americans about illegal immigration:

- ♦ **63% said taxpayers pay too much for education and health care for immigrants.**
- ♦ **56% believe that “illegal immigration increases the likelihood of terrorism.”**
- ♦ **54% said the “wrong kinds of people” are coming to the U.S.”**
- ♦ **45% said they worry that immigrants are taking jobs from Americans.**

As people from other countries make transitions to living here in the U.S., how are they welcomed? What attitudes do Americans have toward immigrants these days? A recent poll conducted from May to August 2004 by National Public Radio, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government found that “American’s views on immigration are less negative than they were in the months just after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.” This is good news.

The survey also found that “nearly as many people (37%) say legal immigration should be kept at its present level as say it should be decreased (41%).” But, the survey also revealed the public is divided over whether they think immigration is good or bad for the country. One thing that seems to make many people uncomfortable is the cultural impact immigrants are perceived as having. In fact, 62% of non-immigrants said that they think the U.S. should be a

country with “a basic American culture and values” instead of “a country made up of many cultures and values that change as new people come here.” What concerns people most, though, is illegal immigration. A large majority want the government to crack down on it.

You can find the complete report, the questionnaire, and additional charts at: www.npr.org/news/specials/polls/2004/immigration/.



National Center for the Study
of Adult Learning and Literacy



NCSALL enhances Web site, links research to practice

The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) has redesigned, reorganized, and moved its Web site to www.ncsall.net.

Through its research, NCSALL addresses questions that concern educators, policymakers, and scholars. Such questions include: Why do some adult learners persist in their studies but others do not? What constitutes effective teaching and learning? What kinds of professional development activities are best for teachers? How can a program's impact on adult learners be measured?

NCSALL's research provides a structured way for those involved in adult literacy education to look at practice and learn from evidence, reducing reliance on trial and error.

Here are updated descriptions of key ongoing research activities. Click on “research,” then on “NCSALL Research Projects” to access reports on these studies.

- ♦ The **Learner Persistence Study** (Harvard Graduate School of Education) investigates the forces that support or discourage adult learners’ persistence in adult education and tests promising strategies that programs can use to support persistence. Practitioners and policymakers can use these findings to make decisions about how to structure programs and classrooms to help learners persist in pursuing their educational goals. *One Day I Will Make It: A Study of Adult Student Persistence in Library Literacy Programs*, which reports on phase 2 of this study, has just been published by MDRC (available at www.mdrc.org). Phase 2 of the study sought to gain a deeper understanding of supports and barriers to persistence identified in phase 1. Phase 2 also sought to develop better ways to measure persistence.
- ♦ The **Longitudinal Study of Adult Learners** (Portland State University) tracks the lives of almost 1,000 adults over an eight-year period by collecting and analyzing data needed to understand how adult literacy develops for those with limited formal education. Practitioners and policymakers can use these findings to make decisions about how to organize programs and instruction to best serve adult learners.

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Lower-literacy adults read differently than those with higher literacy skills — literally!

Thanks to Susan Graf, literacy coordinator for the State Literacy Resource Center, for this information.

Jakob Nielsen, Ph.D., often called the “king of Web usability,” is conducting research about Web use by those with lower literacy skills. His work has implications not just for Web design, but for understanding the mechanics about how this population reads and for choosing Web sites for students to use, as well. Findings recently published at <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20050314.html> include:

- ♦ Lower literacy is different than illiteracy: people with lower literacy can read, but they have difficulties doing so.
- ♦ The most notable difference between lower- and higher-literacy users is that lower-literacy users can't understand a text by glancing at it. They must **read word for word** and often spend considerable time trying to understand multi-syllabic words.
- ♦ Lower-literacy users focus exclusively on each word and slowly move their eyes across each line of text. In other words, they **"plow" the text**, line by line. This gives them a **narrow field of view** and they therefore miss objects outside the main flow of the text they're reading.
- ♦ Unlike higher-literacy users, **lower-literacy users don't scan text**. As a result, for example, they can't quickly glance at a list of navigation options to select the one they want. They must read each word in each option carefully. Their only other choice is to completely skip over large amounts of information, which they often do when things become too complicated.
- ♦ Lower-literacy users tend to **"satisfice"** — accept something as "good enough" — based on very little information because digging deeper requires too much reading, which is both challenging and time-consuming. As soon as text becomes too dense, lower-literacy users start skipping, usually looking for the next link. In doing so, they often overlook important information.
- ♦ In addition, having to **scroll** breaks lower-literacy users' visual concentration because they can't use scanning to find the place they left off.
- ♦ Finally, **search** creates problems for lower-literacy users for two reasons. First, they often have difficulty spelling the query terms. Second, they have difficulty processing search results, which typically show weird, out-of-context snippets of text. As a result, lower-literacy users often simply pick the first hit on the list, even if it's not the most appropriate for their needs.

Dr. Nielsen's work is sponsored by Pfizer, which has a major effort underway to make its consumer communications more understandable to all.

The Institute of Medicine estimates that the national cost to taxpayers could be as much as \$69 BILLION if as few as half the individuals with marginal reading skills were also not health literate — especially with respect to pre-natal and early childhood care. The impact included missed work days and the cost of longer hospital stays.

NCSALL (Continued from page 2)

- ♦ **Health and Adult Learning and Literacy** (Harvard School of Public Health) focuses on how to help teachers integrate health literacy skills of navigation, chronic disease management, and screening/diagnosis into adult basic education classes. Practitioners can use the study circles being developed through this work to develop lesson plans for improving adult learners' health literacy skills and practices. In addition, the team is preparing health literacy guides for developing partnerships among practitioners in public health, adult education, library services, and health care.
- ♦ The **GED Studies** (Brown University) focus on (1) GED and labor market outcomes and participation in adult education programs in correctional facilities (substance abuse programs, vocational education, work release programs) and on (2) the impact of the GED on labor market outcomes and post-secondary participation among adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students. Policymakers can use these findings to make decisions about correctional education and GED-to-college transition programs.
- ♦ The **Adult Reading Components Study** (Harvard Graduate School of Education) offers a portrait of adults enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and basic education classes. It uses clusters based on measures of reading components and assesses the literacy skills of the lowest-level learners.

Extended Programs-K1B
Leadership Activities, ABE Nevada
Community College of Southern Nevada
3200 E. Cheyenne Ave
North Las Vegas, NV 89030-4296



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Discounted registration available for annual ProLiteracy Conference

ProLiteracy Worldwide, the world's largest organization of community-based literacy programs, will hold its annual conference in Tucson, Arizona from October 26 – 29. The event is expected to attract as many as 1,000 adult literacy and basic education leaders and professionals to the Starr Pass Marriott Resort and Spa.

The conference offers more than 80 professional development workshops for program managers, trainers, volunteers, and teachers working with adults who want to improve their literacy skills or for whom English is a second language. To better meet their individual professional development needs, attendees will be able to select workshops from one of six program strands; a seventh strand will offer topics specially selected to meet the needs of the adult students who also attend the conference.

Registration before June 30th nets a 15-20% savings. For more information, call 315/422-9121, ext. 319 or visit <http://www.proliteracy.org/conference/>.

About ProLiteracy

ProLiteracy Worldwide represents 1,200 local program affiliates in all 50 states and operates 95 partner programs in 50 developing countries. Through this extensive global reach, ProLiteracy provides the training, technical assistance, materials, and other support that local literacy programs need to assist adults and their families to acquire or improve their literacy skills. These affiliates and partners work with more than 350,000 adult literacy students each year. ProLiteracy Worldwide is headquartered in Syracuse, N.Y.

Editor: Sharyn Yanoshak ■ Phone: 702/253-6280 ■ Fax: 702/651-4538 ■ E-mail: saylv@cox.net
Community College of Southern Nevada, 3200 E. Cheyenne Ave. – K1B, North Las Vegas, Nevada 89030
Back issues archived at: <http://www.literacynet.org/nvadulted/newsletters.html>